

Norma, in the '80s, my friend since the '50s, stressed out from working 2 jobs to make payments on her new condo and car told me she didn't have time to be my friend anymore and was tired of me dumping guilt trips on her by calling her all the time.

Suzie stopped being my friend after we had a fight, both of us PMSing, after her dog chewed up my new shoes. She called me a vivisectionist and I called her a misogynist.

I'd still like to see all my used-to-be friends. Talk to them on the phone. Have them over for some wine. The friends you lose along the way are like losing your wallet or your job. Friends are like money. Without them you are very poor.

THE GIRLS OF THE CHICKIE RUNS

Where are those girls of the chickie runs, the Natalie Wood one and the other ones? They were all so thin and cute in their tight skirts and sweaters, their cherry Coke kisses driving the guys insane enough to drive off cliffs into the sea like the lemmings and now you see the girls of the chickie runs wearing jogging suits and Nikes fast-walking to shed cream cheese Christmas pounds, wearing down jackets sitting with their old man in beach chairs next to their fishing poles and R.V., some of them have been forced into early retirement from the phone company, some are raising their grandkids after their daughters got strung out in the '80s, a few of them learned shorthand up to 140 words per minute, a few got Ph.D.s, one still skis Jackson Hole, four wear Eva Gabor wigs to hide what chemo did, one bought a million-dollar condo after her husband left her for another man, a lot of them got tattoos and smoke three packs of cigs a day, some grow roses, basil and marijuana, 13 teach aerobics, 10 made videos, 20 take Prozac, one rots in jail for complicity to murder, two slept with John Lennon, one fell out of a jet on her way to Australia, many are becoming curly question marks from osteo, and all of them wish they were thin and cute and still had cherry Coke kisses guys were willing to die for.